Atmospheric Pedagogies: Everyday Ethnographies of the (Post) Pandemic Classroom
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Abstract

This paper offers a series of (auto)ethnographic reflections on COVID-19 and the ways it changes how we, as educators, practice, perform and inhabit the spaces of higher education. Using a phenomenological framework based on the concept of atmosphere, which constitutes an embodied relation in space, we explore pedagogical relations in our felt university classrooms and lectures theatres. We focus our shared attention on the unexpected and unplanned political possibilities and emotional opportunities that arise from teaching in (post) COVID atmospheres. Thinking atmospherically about pedagogy shows how the dislocating pandemic may open onto a felt politics of disruption and transgression.

Thinking Atmospherically

COVID-19 is "a force that redefines boundaries and reconfigures our experience, interpretation, and understanding of the outside world."[1] The virus ruptured and reordered large and small geographies with such force and suddenness that the assumed naturalness of previous everyday worlds was called into question. For two years, the world was (and in many ways, still is) in the grip of a virus that reorganized societal structures from the mundane to the large and abstract. Borders and boundaries that include and exclude bodies, distinguish between inside and outside, separate home from work, private from public, and mark the domains of the individual and the collective, were reified, redrawn and reinvented. New geographies unfolded through objects and materialities including masks, vaccines and COVID passports; spatial strategies of quarantining, isolating, locking down and distancing; and digital technologies that map, track, monitor and enable new channels of communication that bridge but also perpetuate new distances and boundaries. So much, and all so very abrupt, as if a large, dark cloud suddenly shrouded global infrastructures and changed the weather for two long years. Today, with different clouds overshadowing the sky, it may be tempting to pretend that COVID never happened, even though the scars it left behind cannot be forgotten.

Similarly to the virus itself, COVID-19's many geographies are shaped by the forces of the atmospheric. "Atmosphere" in this context must be understood as referring to both the air of materiality and governance,[2] and the differently embodied world of emotions and feelings.[3] Atmosphere is about breath, as much as it is about affect. As such, COVID, just like other atmospheric events, shares an aerography that, on the one hand, is inherently tangible and physical, but on the other hand, it is ephemeral, affective, and felt. These registers of air are not mutually exclusive. Entangled with each other, they overlap and intersect in the making and constant remaking of the atmospheres that we inhabit and travel through. From over-crowded hospital wards to empty high streets, from concealed smiles, separated pub tables, to socially distanced flirting, from long vaccination queues in the west[4] to a lack of access to vaccination in the Global South, COVID atmospheres are at one and the same time emotional, material, physiological, psychological, political, racial, classed, gendered, and always embodied. And just as sudden as they appeared, fleetingly cementing new worlds of meaning, they disappeared, or so we would like to believe in the privileged parts of the world with relatively fortunate COVID experiences. Yet bodies—including the social body—remember. As long COVID (or "post-COVID-19 syndrome"), complications arising from weakened immune systems and the virus itself continue to affect everyday corporeal realities around the globe, the "life of the felt body" unfolds as feelings move through the material body while simultaneously extending beyond it.[5] Atmosphere refers to a body's pre-reflective, affective involvement.[6] These invisible trajectories have material consequences, too, as what is felt becomes imprinted on both spaces and memories.

We aim to map out horizons of thinking and registers of feeling that the "COVID-19 era" brought out and brought about, perhaps amplified, subverted, or further entrenched in the multiple and often incommensurable atmospheres of the spaces of the modern university. In an attempt to uncover the ways in which COVID has affected learning, teaching and relations between students and teachers, this contribution focuses on the specificity of the atmospheres in and of the university classroom before and during the pandemic, stretching into the condition of what we describe as (post) pandemic. By classroom we refer not only to the spatiotemporal coordinates of pedagogical relations but following bell hooks, we also understand it as "the most radical space of possibility in the academy."[7] By engaging our own embodied positionality as educators at two different locations in the UK and Austria, we set out to investigate the atmospheric properties of the online pandemic classroom and that of the (post) pandemic present by mapping out some of the ways in which experiences, bodily sensations and sensibilities have been constituted within them. As Gernot Böhme writes, "atmosphere is what is *in between,* what mediates the two sides" of environmental aspects and lived experience, and as such, it is "responsible for the way we feel about ourselves in that environment."[8] Meaning resides in the felt atmosphere.

We study the atmospheres that have shaped (post-) COVID classrooms in two analytical moves. First, we explore the atmospheric properties of what we experienced as the pre-pandemic "normal" as an attempt to locate the concept of "atmosphere" within our lived, everyday pedagogical trajectories. We do this to recognize that the memory of the physical classroom and our inhabitation of it continue to serve as points of references in thinking about the "new" normal of the (post-) pandemic. After grounding ourselves in our singular locations, we move with the change of atmospheres into the terrain of online and hybrid classroom experiences, where our observations merge beyond geographical situatedness and cultural specificities. What we offer in this paper is therefore not only a contribution to the growing archive of (post-) pandemic pedagogical experiences. We look at and look back on the online classroom as an experimental atmosphere that brings up a series of questions not only for "pandemic pedagogy"[9] but, thinking alongside hooks, also for how we can approach and experience education as "a practice of freedom" under conditions of dislocation. The question of where and how transgression—the movement that "makes education the practice of freedom"[10]—may be found, enabled and facilitated is an issue of atmosphere. More precisely, we argue that transgression enjoys an atmospheric dimension shaped by a "desire to encourage excitement" which, hooks writes, can "[disrupt] the atmosphere of seriousness assumed to be essential to the learning process."[11] Excitement is not a private affair, walled off by the boundaries of the self, but a collectively shared atmosphere that touches, engulfs, and moves bodies. It is the fruit of a collective activity of sharing "interest in one another, in hearing one another's voices, in recognizing one another's presence."[12] Excitement is about openness to each other and a possibility for growth, wellbeing, and self-realization. This attentive, vivid presence unconfined to any single body is the foundation through which sparks are ignited and ideas can travel. It is not, however, the only atmosphere that can be found in a classroom. Tension, pleasure, fear, docility, competition, boredom, and relief are all constitutive parts of the irreducible plurality of affective atmospheres that immerse us in the emotional complexity of pedagogical relationships.

These pathways of thinking, feeling, and reflection are also generative of specific atmospheres. As thoughts attach to an external point, they directly affect the bodies of both self and other. Thinking alongside hooks, negotiations and modes of engagement mediated by technology in the pandemic classroom make us ask: what does it mean to navigate and continue to work towards co-creating atmospheres that foster wellbeing and growth for everyone involved, teachers and students alike? And now, with COVID imagined "done and gone," what happens to these atmospheres? Where have they gone, and how might they travel on? How do they continue to morph and change shape, and with what implications?

Drawing on a range of different yet resonant conceptual and personal resources we set out to explore some of the atmospheric properties of online teaching during the global pandemic and its aftermath through everyday ethnographies. In this effort, as a counter-gesture to what has been presented and carried out as a rapid and logistical transition, we seek "immersion in ordinary experience, oriented to the multiple ways in which [the everyday] is seen, said, unsaid, done and felt."[13] In opening up some of the mundane registers of teaching and learning under and post-COVID, we work towards finding ways of narrating lived and felt experiences that depart from remain committed in the feeling body as a site of agency and a location of politics. Following the work of "new phenomenological" thinkers, including Hermann Schmitz[14] and Gernot Böhme,[15] we first engage with the notion of atmosphere and its relationship to the felt body [*Leib*]. We then map out our own embodied situatedness in the classroom and within the atmospheres of university architectures that we work within as per the "old" and the "new" normal. Zooming in on a range of pedagogical experiences generated by the pandemic, we draw out particular registers of sensing and sense-making, mapping out and probing into possible ways in which we may inhabit and co-create atmospheres in a creative and affirmative manner, and inevitably, extend beyond the (online) classroom. In this effort and throughout these explorations we *think atmospherically.* We follow the movements of the feeling body as we think through the notion of atmosphere for the purpose of understanding more deeply and moving more fully into the present in thought, feeling and our embodied being. In conjunction with philosophical inquiry, we engage what travels beyond the material and mental frames of already established practice, embracing the elusiveness of both meaning and experience as gateways into ethical, political, and pedagogical possibility. (Auto) ethnographic sensibility in these negotiations serves as an instance of "embodied methodology"[16] that not only talks *about* the body, but listens to it, grounding its meaning-making processes within its affective trajectories. As such, the sentiment of the unfixed, mobile felt body informs the inconclusiveness and discussion of some of our findings. Finally, we turn to the questions of what has and has not changed in pedagogical relationships; why it matters; and what the "new" normal does to, and possibly, *for* our teaching. We argue for taking seriously the weight of fleeting atmospheres in pedagogical practice, both in its dislocation and with regards to its transgressive potential.

Atmospheres, Bodies, and the Places of Feeling

The term "atmosphere" has found its way from the phenomenological writings of the somewhat underappreciated German philosopher Hermann Schmitz, who deployed the term as part of his "New Phenomenology" [*Neue Phänomenologie*],[17] to become a mainstay concept in studies of design,[18] architecture,[19] but also in aesthetics,[20] geography,[21] politics,[22] and even psychiatry.[23] One of the attractions of taking atmospheres seriously is that they offer an opportunity to think of affect and emotions as both spatially and geographically significant. Griffero writes that "atmospheres are feelings poured out into space."[24] Equally important is to recognize that atmospheres are also producers of space.

Atmospheres, while terminologically ambiguous and difficult to pin down conceptually, are specific in both meaning and the feeling(s) they evoke. Atmospheres are "emotional,"[25] "affective,"[26] and "shared."[27] Sara Ahmed explains that affect and emotions are not individualized and self-contained, but relational and collective in the making of politics.[28] An illuminating example of the "stickiness" of emotions is provided in Angharad Closs Stephens's study of the 2012 London Olympics.[29] She observes that atmospheres during the event were collectively, but unevenly, felt through practices such as the waving of flags, the booing of spectators, or torch relays. Such practices, objects, routines, colors, smells, and other elementally immersive forces fuse into atmospheres that are not merely symbolic but also affective, yet they are unstable and diffuse in the broader shaping of national essences and identities of self and other. Böhme describes the experience of atmospheres as "something which can come over us, into which we are drawn, which takes possession of us like an alien power."[30]

The unclear sovereignty underpinning the operations of this diffuse power travels through feeling bodies. The emphasis on the politics of the feeling body is central to Schmitz's original and prolific writing on atmospheres.[31] Due to the prevalence of post-structuralist thought and the philosophical heritage of the Frankfurt School, his writing, until recently, received scant attention. Böhme, his more renowned interlocutor whose work has become synonymous to atmospheres, explains that one of the reasons for this lack of recognition is the long-lasting legacy of critical theory and its refusal to engage with the felt or "lived" body [as *Leib*].[32] Critical theory, which historically centers attention on the politics of presentation and language, prioritizes the authority of the mind over the body. Schmitz's "embodied phenomenology" [*Leibphänomenologie*], instead, focuses on the body and its capacity to feel and evoke as ontologically significant. Schmitz argues for the centrality of embodied emotions and feelings as the basis of consciousness and posits his work against the historically prevailing western philosophical tradition that emphasizes the individual's mind, soul, brain, or reason as the marker of self-identification ["self-ascription"]. Schmitz denounces this stance as "*psychologistic–reductionist–introjectionist objectification,*"[33] and explains that

> The foundation of personhood is not the soul, but the life of the felt body [*Leib*] as a life in the primitive present [i.e., an ontological condition of awareness that fuses *here*, *now*, *being*, *this* and *I*], marked by corporeal dynamism and corporeal communication, without a closed-off private inner sphere.[34]

His critique of the west's historical "privatisation of the emotional sphere"[35] draws on phenomenological distinctions between a material and anatomic body [*Körper*] and a feeling body [*Leib*].[36] The former is delimited by its own physicality and location while the latter, emphasized in his philosophy as the organizing principle, is defined by a spatiality that is immersive, diffused yet ontologically absolute.[37] His understanding of the feeling body, which approximates that of contemporary feminist thought on the body,[38] approaches the body as a constitutive part of a self that senses and attunes to [*spüren*] its surrounding.[39] The feelings [*Gefühle*] of this felt body, which is the object of awareness, are not located within the interiors of the body but exist in an exterior that the feeling body accesses, is gripped by, and pulled towards.[40] Schmitz's notion of the felt body is the bodily feeling of atmospheres. It captures the body's ability to feel "without relying on corroboration by the five senses,"[41] and immerses the body with its surroundings. Embodied feeling, therefore, is always a relational practice of feeling-with attuned to the present and marked by the past. This means also that the felt body is neither fixed in its form, nor static in time and space. It is porous, absorbing, relational and expansive [*Weitung*], for instance, in moments of joy or animation, in a football stadium, or on the dancefloor, and contracts or constricts in situations of stress or panic when in a room for a job interview, or on stage delivering a lecture. The location, never precise, of this always feeling body, "spatially extended in a way similar to sound,"[42] is determined by moods and ambiances that are often not of its own making. The felt body, "if one opens oneself to it, manifests itself, in terms of the phenomenality characterized by Schmitz, as something that happens to one."[43] Atmospheres, in this understanding, have an ability to shake, engage, stir, dislocate, and otherwise move the feeling body.

Although this body can repress and resist emotions, it cannot ignore them, or ever fully control them. Instead, the feeling body always spatially attuning to and extending in space, finds itself perpetually affected by, fused with, or rejected by its surroundings. "A mood," Ahmed writes,[44]

> is thus rather like an atmosphere: it is not that we catch a feeling from another person but that we are caught up in feelings that are not our own… an atmosphere is what is with someone, or around them; if a body might bring a lively atmosphere *with* them, that situation becomes lively.

Feelings, in that sense, are situated exterior "as powers that intervene as stimuli into human bodily existence."[45] Schmitz posits feelings and emotions in a shared affective and relational space: an atmosphere, which involves other objects and bodies. Bodies are entangled with (or posited against) others and their surroundings to form assemblages that spatialize; they "fill the room" with emotions and feelings.[46] "In my opinion," he writes, "*emotions are atmospheres poured out spatially* that move the felt (not the material) body."[47] Starting from the premise that atmospheres are spatial, simultaneously attuning to moods whilst also extending beyond them, the Swiss architect Peter Zumthor remarks:

> I enter a building, see a room, and—in the fraction of a second—have this feeling about it…. Not every situation grants us time to make up our minds on whether we like something or whether indeed we might be better heading off in the opposite direction. Something inside us tells us an enormous amount straight away.[48]

Analyzing atmospheres as the coming-together of immersive as well as phenomenological forces impacting on and mingling with (human and non-human) bodies acknowledges that their making, design, and evolution is a historical process. Architects, designers, teachers, and choreographers, but also air-conditioners, marketeers, perfumes, musicians, crowds and even chefs: all are producers of atmospheres, evoking ambiances that reside within the memories of a feeling body from which an affect, often a specific one, is expected. The perfect atmosphere is the one where bodies are unaware of its engineering, and police themselves willingly or unconsciously.[49] Expectations, however, are not always met, as atmospheres often operate independently from their original intentions. A new atmosphere emerges from the rubble of its original design. Fundamentally, atmospheres are difficult to constrain or contain. For instance, in their study of security measures in the spaces of air travel, Bissell et al. show how affective responses can exceed attempts to engineer, manipulate and capture atmospheres.[50] In their example, endeavors to create a safe environment are shown to have the opposite effect in that they bring about an atmosphere of fear. In other words, while atmospheres possess an excessive intentionality that is difficult to regulate, it does not preclude attempts to do so.

Jean-Paul Thibaud invites us to

> [c]onsider the conditioned environments of shopping malls, the planted areas of eco-neighborhoods, the process of "heritagization" of historic town centers, the privatization of gated communities, the new scenes of the creative city, and the functional atmospheres of public transport facilities: in each case, every effort is made to create an ambiance, to channel sensations and to make people feel a particular *Stimmung*.[51]

Atmospheres affect, pushing or "throwing" [*werfen*] the felt body to feel and thus relate to a material environment. Their geographies, therefore, are not neutral, as they both shape and are shaped by historical political geographies. For instance, the quiet atmosphere of the university classroom impresses on the student, whose affective silence, in turn, contributes to the production and consolidation of the classroom atmosphere. The anticipating silence that forms one of the pillars of this atmosphere is not neutral but, similarly to the physicality of the classroom, a consequence of historically constructed expectations. Joy as much as dread are equally embodied responses associated with being in, but also felt before entering this silent atmosphere. This silence, however, is neither a natural condition nor a standard for either learning or teaching effectively. Neither is it devoid of feeling, nor is it a marker of safety. Silence, instead, is an expression of the classroom's atmosphere felt unevenly by bodies. In fact, as hooks reminds us, "many students, especially students of color, may not feel at all 'safe' in what appears to be a neutral setting. It is the absence of a feeling of safety that often promotes prolonged silence or lack of student engagement."[52] Conversely, as we know from our own experience, there is a reason for white, middle class, male students to often break this silence, while other students fear it. Irreducibly, "the felt body is a feeling body,"[53] but the specifics of its feelings are historically gendered, classed, and raced. Atmospheres are rarely, if ever, without a politics

Atmospheres encourage us to think through the invisible and nebulous political geographies of what is felt in the different environments we inhabit. What is felt where? And, importantly, who feels what and where? Feelings about a specific atmosphere or the feeling of an atmosphere—as far as these two registers can be disentangled—are neither shared nor felt universally by different bodies. A single flying St. George flag hanging out of a window in a northern English town, filling up an atmosphere much larger than a house or even street, is at once an emotional expression of working-class pride, bourgeois shame, racial hate, haunting colonial pain and much more.[54] Feeling bodies fuse and collide in mid-air, enveloped, trapped perhaps, in an invisible, magnetic allure. Andreas Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos writes that "atmosphere appears as air enclosure, a *sphere* of *air* and *mist*

as the etymology shows, that makes it difficult to break away and leave behind."[55] Atmospheres attract and repel bodies pulled by hidden strings of histories. They fuse with and expand those bodies that belong, and reject and contract those not belonging. "Feeling small" is not a metaphor.

Pedagogic Atmospheres

Lecture theaters and other places in educational infrastructures can make certain bodies feel small while other bodies expand. What can we say about the atmosphere of the place and institution that we, educators, know most intimately? The place that we, through our embodied inhabitation and performative enactment cultivate, (co)produce and reproduce? We experience this old, yet always potentially radical, space in and through our feeling bodies and in exchange with those of others. Our points of departure into engaging (post) pandemic classrooms and the atmospheres they give rise to, and hold are what our bodies still know and remember best. At this juncture, "we" temporarily folds back into "Marijn" and "Erzsébet" as we first map out our insertion and immersion in our respective institutional cultures and milieus as per our default, pre-pandemic experiences. In this effort, thinking atmospherically requires a special kind of attentiveness that re-grounds attention in the feeling body. The "felt body" is not only an analytical category, but also a sentiment that our writing seeks to *make felt* and carry beyond analytical language. The two ethnographic notes that follow serve as vehicles for locating the atmospheres of the physical classroom by narrating our ongoing, embodied personal and professional negotiations of them. The lines of separation and hierarchical ordering that mark these spaces do not disappear in the online environment. Yet to understand how they travel, morph, and take on new properties, as well as what new atmospheres and opportunities arise when pedagogy becomes dislocated, removed from its conventional spatial coordinates, we first need to explore what affective imprints our bodies brought with themselves as they moved into and were moved by what was yet unknown.

Marijn writes:

The University lecture "theater": a place of promise, a stage of aspiration, but also fear; not outside class, gender, ability, and race, albeit sometimes conveniently imagined as if existing on a separate, higher plane. It is a site and, indeed, an atmosphere in which those categories of power and difference are evoked, consolidated, and reinforced. I am a white male, the majority of my undergraduate students are middle- to upper-middle-class and white; the British university that employs me is made of the same sort of whiteness; and so, in other words, the atmosphere I teach and breathe in is white. On stage my body is no longer simply a body, it "is sublimated in the representation of at least one other body, the teaching body of which it should be at once a part and the whole."[56] Everything fits as "second skin," the coffee shop, the library, the campus traffic lights, all fused with other white bodies transforming into a vast ocean of comfort… until… wait… the atmosphere changes by means of intrusion. A foreign object, the Other walks in. A pause. "Who are you? Why are you here? What are you doing?... Being stopped is not just stressful: it makes the 'body' itself the 'site' of social stress."[57] A liberal reflex can be felt moving through the air. It resists by pretending there is nothing to see or, maybe, acts with an unwillingness to feel that color makes difference. "Everything is fine," so long as we do not acknowledge the felt change in the white atmosphere. A fellow geographer, Aretina Hamilton, reflects on how "race takes place" in academic conferences and classrooms:

> The violence slides into the perimeter of your mind the first time you walk into your first class and become "the other" even as you discuss imperial eyes and othering. Even as you read about decolonization and critique imperialism, you find yourself shrinking or cutting off your own tongue just so that you can survive to live another day.[58]

In pursuit of a "pedagogy of discomfort,"[59] I teach my students about race, including its connection to coloniality and modernity, accounts of its lived experience, its affective and emotional geographies. I ask them to care about the privilege that comes from not having to reflect on, worry about or feel race outside the atmosphere of the large lecture theatre we inhabit together for the next 50 minutes. The moment the clock reaches 15:55, however, when the atmosphere in the room changes from concentration to relaxation, when doors open and the outside slowly creeps into the inside, race is shelved as one among a series of other "important" academic "concepts." It summons the privilege of being able to forget about race or to think about it as an idea for an essay, or the right answer to a difficult exam question.

Before that moment, before the bubble bursts, I stand on stage, which, although rarely written about,[60] is carefully built by universal design foregrounding a specific sensory experience and body.[61] The colonial architecture of the classroom and the accompanying curriculum of knowledge authority replaced festivals, rituals and storytelling as places and practices of education. The stage is the place where truth gets revealed. My "body in the center of a space, is exposed on all sides."[62] Objects, hands, sounds, and bodies mingle to (co)produce an atmosphere not

only for the delivery or consumption of knowledge but also to ensure the continuation of familiar architectures, designs and routines of inclusion and exclusion. My white skin does something. It expands and fuses with the materialities in my surroundings. One of the things it does, of course, is provide comfort to white students by conceptualizing race and theorizing violence. In this atmosphere, with this body, here and now, it is difficult for me to challenge, let alone undermine, the whiteness of the atmosphere that I am a crucial part of. I run into the boundaries of formal critique and wonder if and how I can transgress the limitations of my body and break the "false dichotomy between the world outside and the inside world of the academy."[63]

Something is off, however, something peculiar unfolds as my words travel and fill the air in the theatre. Something pulls me back and makes my body feel a bit smaller. At first, there is silence and anticipation—a defining mix of atmospheric circumstances inherent to the staging of the western classroom—for what is about to come, what is promised and paid for: mastery of knowledge, expert reason, words, "ground-breaking" ideas, and maybe, with a bit of luck, Truth itself will be revealed.... I know that my entire body is part of an unspoken agreement and historical construct that merely requires performative iteration. What envelops the air of atmosphere, however, is a dislocating voice with an "unusual" tongue. My words never seem quite accurate, for which I apologize (I do, when asked or on my own accord), and those that find me and come out to play feel twisted and warped. My teaching is always insecure, always uncomfortable, strained, and nervous—these "illegitimate" and intimate embodied feelings are left without a public place of their own. Yet, or so I would like to believe, my white and masculine curtain (as part of my physical body, or *Körper*) cloaks my hesitation, anxiety, and discomfort.[64] The only audible thing that works against "me" is my accent, I hope, but then again, an accent is never "just an accent." An accent is outside and otherworldly and has a capacity to disrupt language and thought from within.

As my voice [*Stimme*] fills and tunes [*stimmen*] the atmosphere [*Stimmung*], my unaspirated "p" and "k" and corrupted "w" code over academic reasoning and threaten to dislocate listeners to an altogether different place. We are not separate from our voice, Schmitz writes,

> just as the fire is not behind its burning or a man looking is not behind his gaze: it resolves into it, like the wind does in blowing. Just as one cannot ask the corresponding question with respect to the wind, one cannot ask, with respect to the voice, what it does when it does not resonate.[65]

I monitor my breathing carefully to retain control of the room.[66] My speech and breath transgress the boundaries of the here and the there.[67] I concentrate and strain my tongue to speak with and not against the atmosphere. Have I not worked hard enough, long enough to sound native? Maybe I am not smart enough? The energy and "emotional labor" invested in ensuring the "safe" and smooth staging of a specific atmosphere takes its toll on bodies.[68] "Before preparing the text of a lecture, I find I must prepare myself for the scene I shall encounter as I speak... [A]n occasion for silent, paralytic deliberation. I feel like a hunted animal, looking in darkness for a way out where none is to be found. Every exit is blocked."[69] With a force greater than a metaphor, a feeling of overwhelm takes hold and grips my body. From the moment words fade in the last conversation between students to the first backpack making its appearance, readying its owner for a swift liftoff, this staged atmosphere impresses itself onto hundreds of students' bodies and my own. "His teaching is tense," a student remarked a few years ago. I know their experience of my embodied performance to ring true, as I feel tense, my felt body is tense, I am tense. There is no point in denying that on an ontological plane; my teaching body *is* "tense," but I don't dare to make what I feel a topic of conversation in class. "How can it be that recovering one's capacity to experience and see emotions *could be detrimental to one's thinking*?"[70] Everything appears to be at stake in this immersive, intensive, and affective environment that takes possession of all bodies and forces them into an unacknowledged relational field of intensities that seems to exist in parallel with the detached and "neutral objectivity" of the lecture theatre.

Erzsébet writes:

I walk into the seminar room of an MA program at a university that operates in a hybrid space, in multiple senses. It has always inhabited "in-betweenness" yet with an orientation: to facilitate the transformation of the Soviet legacy in Central and Eastern Europe through an American learning architecture. After its forcible relocation to another country, the university is still in "Central Europe," at least through the eyes as well as the spatial sensibilities and sensitivities of "Central Europeans." Moving from Hungary to Austria, however, it is now firmly located in the west geographically while it continues to be dislocated in other senses. Some atmospheres of belonging and community seem to have travelled across the border while others didn't.

Even after a couple of years of walking the corridors and teaching in these rooms, I can't help but notice the striking whiteness of walls and the large office windows with motorized blinds, many of which cannot be opened for safety reasons. Despite efforts to domesticate the space as a temporary home and accommodate the needs of

new inhabitants, the subtle markers of a corporate environment still linger on. The robustness of the building and the transparency of glass perpetuate the aesthetics of a former financial institution. Movement feels constricted in narrow, dark corridors illuminated by bright, luminescent rugs and separated by various types of security doors, as we head towards the distinguished sites where our minds and social imaginations—and, trustfully, our feeling capacity—may expand. I often pause and marvel at the ease with which students, who have no memory of the institution's infrastructural and atmospheric past, live in and breathe new life into the architectural design which was meant to serve the smooth flow of financial transactions. As the feeling body moves in space, at however small a scale, neither the body, nor the space remains the same.

I walk in as a westernized yet "not quite Western other,"[71] who simultaneously represents, or rather, stands in for the gold standard and authority of western knowledge Having studied and worked in British higher education for a good decade, I carry a recognizable western mark on my formation as a knowing subject,[72] declared to be strong enough institutionally to convene the course and convey "the message" of the discipline. While I speak the language of Anglo-Saxon social science, I mostly circle around language as a foreign object. I fill in but do not fully fit the frame: the accent and sometimes the syntax, the awkward, or not-quite-fitting phrases give me away immediately. The unease renders me forever foreign. Born and raised in Hungary, I often wonder: who is, where is that "western self" that speaks through me? Sometimes these are subtle differences, and on those occasions even I think to myself that "I can pull this off." On other occasions, the "colonial difference,"[73] my distance to what I imagine my performance should look and sound like fills the silences between words, and the anxiety that comes with being judged on these real or imaginary terms adds some strange vibration to the schwas, which start to resemble muffled sighs. On those days, I think to myself, students must really tune their ears to the "content," and perhaps, the intention behind these words, if they want to get close enough to the desired core of imperial science.

Yet as per its positioning and conditioning in "the colonial matrix of power,"[74] the body from which the voice emanates, my second world body, feels invisible. I walk in, towards the place that is marked for me in front of the whiteboard, so that *I*, the teacher, can be seen by everyone. The setup of the room channels all the attention in my direction, and as I stand in front of the group of ten to 30 students, I often feel that I am turning translucent. Their gazes pierce right through me. Something in me, surprisingly, agrees. After all, I am here to provide the bridge to western science, which may already be visibly written behind my back, on the slides that I am showing. "*I* do not have to show." On that note, I ponder alongside Tlostanova:

> [W]hat does it mean to be a void? What does it mean to be aware of the fact that the second-world narrative in history is over, that victory is already granted to the presumed enemy, and no one really expects the defeated side to resurrect and pester the world with absurd claims to existence?[75]

While I continue to negotiate these claims within myself and sometimes in writing, without end, I also worry about what I am missing, trapped within the confines of these existential ruminations. I am anxious that this shield of invisibility might make me blind to other forms of violence, while it also shuts me off from encounters with modes of being and ways of knowing that exist on parallel planes to what the lingering atmospheric legacies of the post-Soviet space may allow to feel and make sense of.

About half of the group from the post-Soviet space is probably familiar with resonant feelings of being stuck in self-doubt and under pressure to embody (what is imagined as) the western ideal. I have witnessed how so many of them—us—routinely embody invisibility as a specific articulation of global racial politics without problematizing this way of being, thinking and relating to world and self. Being invisible often means a category of "white" without the first world privilege in the west and westernized spaces. It feels like being suspended between the aspiration to become the "right" kind of subject and the already inscribed impossibility to ever achieve it. Those members of the group who more confidently identify as western and non-western may find this liminal aspect to be of intellectual and personal interest, as either some "critical distance" from the western neoliberal university, or as a springboard to western academia and the international labor market. The latter, for the "not-quite-Western other," is also a common reason for being here. Once, I had the same reason as a student to be here, at the same university, at its original location. In this old-new space, "the body moves; it re-performs, searching,"[76] and (un)learning of diverse kinds, happens.

Pandemic Ethnographies

The atmospheres of Marijn's undergraduate lecture hall and Erzsébet's postgraduate seminar room illuminate bifurcated worlds that function based on an absolute yet false dichotomy between emotion and reason. The discursive rationality and inner rationalization of academic practice is embodied deeply, while on the other hand,

little opportunity is left to explore the ways in which meaning is felt by the body. Our day-to-day negotiations of language, accent, invisibility, and whiteness, as well as various forms of silence emerge as atmospheric properties that are both historically produced and shaped by the actuality of pedagogical relations and materialities within which we are located. What happens, however, in times of dislocation, when the atmospheres in university spaces become mediated by distance and technology? When bodies are reduced to the size of a face without limbs, a two-dimensional, pixelated image among many others, perfectly aligned in horizontal rows on a screen, or—more extreme still—when they are replaced altogether by names written with Google font "Lato" on a black background. "Are you there?" Is anyone? What remains, if anything, of the original embodied atmosphere when bodies no longer share a common sphere but a dispersed geography of sofa beds, kitchen tables, park benches, bedroom walls, café corners, library seats? Who stages this digital decor amidst COVID's pervasive and spatially transformative atmosphere? How is it policed, and through what designs and architectures? Yet, equally importantly, what are the ways in which transformational experiences, new forms of learning, "acts of knowing"[77] and lines of solidarity may, can and, yes, will continue to unfold? We turn our attention to such questions by thinking atmospherically through the changes and considerations that COVID provoked in our pedagogical practices.

We recall how the move to online teaching, the moment it was no longer an emergency measure but a deliberate policy choice, was paved with invitations for training on how to teach online. Although unclear about the details, something about teaching practice, it seemed, was not transferable to a space where bodies are no longer corporally co-present. The other was no longer within physical reach, and that called for other modalities of control; that is, ways in which particular kinds of learning experiences could be facilitated and, as student accounts reveal, often engineered with force.[78] The university as a distinct location, as a physical place for a particular cultivation of thinking and being-together is diffused into splinters that enter the private lifeworlds of "home" through screen, mouse, and keyboard. The "safe haven" that the university's "learning space" offers is no longer there in one's intimate surroundings and vice versa: matters of the private seeping into a class discussion through the confines of Zoom may not be protected within the university architecture either. As what has been habitually practiced as "private" and "public" collapse into each other, different intimacies and senses of familiarity require renegotiation. Pets, friends, family, mail carriers, neighbors, objects, colors, shadows, shades, smells, and sounds among many other oblique "details" disrupt the aesthetics of the silent and professional atmosphere while enacting the "serious self" through a distorted frame yields a fragmentary performance. The fragmentation and sensory reorganization of practices, objects and feelings gives rise to a multiplication of atmospheres, combining and overlapping as bodies meet and relate. With eyes half on screen, half off screen; with four fingers on a keyboard, and those on the other hand stroking a cat's back; children screaming, and smells coming from the kitchen, with the buzzing sound of cheap laptop speakers, new atmospheres propel the feeling body to adapt to a new classroom environment.

Self and other show up as two-dimensional images in front of themselves and each other, and the body, in its wholeness and multi-dimensionality, also makes an appearance. Expressions may slip out of control and so does the possibility to rectify them on the spot, drawing support from an encouraging gaze, or a remorseful posture: some feel they tread on eggshells; others choose not to speak, or overcompensate with loudness or assertiveness. Some cannot bear these tensions and send notes of apology. Others, for various reasons, don't show up at all. The pandemic classroom and its permanent "on"-ness keeps us—teachers and students alike—on our toes. The silences of the old classroom travel to the online space. Students and educators are both hesitant to break the authority silence invokes, but its atmospheric affect appears to operate and feel differently. We blame technology and learn to cultivate patience for technological mishaps, miscommunications, stuttering insecurities and other expressions in our atmospheric retuning.

What happens, then, in the space when some of the old boundaries that thread through and structure university life are diffused and new lines of separation emerge? What pedagogical potential lies within the dislocated classroom? Where and how can we locate the sites for engaged, embodied pedagogy that, to paraphrase hooks, furthers "ways of knowing that enhance [the] capacity to live fully and deeply,"[79] and not only for students but also for everyone involved? We engage these questions through the prism of the felt body in its many relations. Based on our shared experiences we tease out two pathways that the (post) pandemic classroom made accessible as possible grounds of experimentation for "education as the practice of freedom."[80]

Expanding the Felt Body

"Everyone is in their bubbles"—we both heard students and colleagues describe the "new normal" of the pandemic university in such and similar terms. The sense of spherical intimacy associated with working and learning together loses the property of physical proximity: what does it mean, what can it mean to be open and vulnerable

at a distance? The space stretching in-between the physical body and the environment appear and operate as an enclosure within other enclosures; as mobile, intersecting spheres, attaching to and detaching from each other in a largely unpredictable fashion. The collective imagination of a shared plane of belonging, even if this plane has never been homogenous, let alone equal, is suspended in its materiality. As students' square-shaped icons line up on Zoom—with or without cameras on, and sometimes even without proper names displayed—the foam-like structure of contemporary experience that COVID forcefully brought to the fore is uncovered.[81] Sloterdijk observes "the tight proximity between fragile units, but also of the necessary self-enclosure of each foam cell, even though they can only exist as users of shared separation installations."[82]

While the "separation installations" both enable and limit presence in online teaching, they can also emerge as a connective register in the same capacity. Teaching and learning through Zoom and other platforms becomes a relatable experience globally, even if how the interaction of "bubbles," as carefully engineered or unplanned affective atmospheres, may or may not work in any given virtual classroom remains at least partially obscure. The variety of Zoom backgrounds as stylized, individualized absences censor and invisibilize "life" deemed not to be appropriate, constructive, or necessary for a co-created learning atmosphere. In the backdrop of harvesting technology for enhanced interactivity in the classroom, creativity makes an appearance in mundane personal choices that keep out and aim to protect "the personal." A grey icon with or without a proper name displayed, one that shows no image or sound, that doesn't give or respond to signals, allowing no sensory access to others into the lifeworld of whoever and whatever may be there behind the screen, performs a liminal function. It appears as a placeholder for the possibility of connection in the here and now, even if that potential is not actualized. The person has joined the class yet through a nominal appearance without a body visible on screen, or one that can be heard speaking: does their invisible presence count as a form of participation? Our felt bodies respond with anxiety to this digital silent atmosphere of black screens under which names are visible alongside presentation slides. Our voices transmitted to all corners of the globe to ears on faces we may never see on screen. In what ways does whiteness and invisibility matter with cameras turned off? What do language, accent and the silences between and around words do in these new atmospheres?

An often-unverifiable digital identity gestures at the presence of the singularity of the person, who is not reducible to their avatar, and probing even further into our social making, it foregrounds our fundamental co-constitution through interactions with others. Agamben writes that "it is only through recognition by others that man can constitute himself as a person."[83] When there is no moving image of the body that resembles a living relationship, the frames and possibility of social recognition are no longer given either. Students may accommodate their peers and their choices more smoothly on the horizontal plane stretching between them. However, we wonder, how does presence through the placeholder of a grey icon affect the vertical structures of pedagogical relationships? When the comfort of "knowing" and having access to the other is no longer there, when the proximity of feeling-with is thrown into question, being-with and accepting the not-knowing can be transformational. Instead of feeling powerless, humility as well as respect and trust may arise. Our challenge as educators is to cultivate a pedagogical space that welcomes multiple forms of participation and presence, including presence via absence. Learning to appreciate and care for what—that is, *who*[84] may disappear or choose to withdraw from sight, could engender a new practice of being- and feeling-with, alongside a politics that keeps expanding the body's sensing capacity beyond the five basic senses. In that way, *Leib*, the felt body, may extend to and embrace the yet-unknown with renewed courage to trust and feel with less judgment.[85] Bubbles, as atmospheres of digital intimacy, can perhaps grow to connect by incorporating and at the same time, transgressing the separation installation that gives rise to them.

Grounding the Felt Body

Questions related to presence in times of the pandemic also impact self-presence—the fragile personal space within one's own bubble—and the ability to trust one's capacity to "make sense." Not only the other, the self, too appears at a distance and in a strongly meditated fashion to itself. In an interview given to fellow students as part of a class assignment that investigated the pandemic trajectories of university life, a student remarked: "the problem is when you are locked inside all the time, staring at the screen, looking at yourself on Zoom, you literally and figuratively end up only talking to yourself, which becomes eventually a fucking hall of mirrors, and a funhouse." They lament that "things become distorted" and people forget "how to socialize in certain ways because they have been inside all the time." The other's embodied presence is not only key for mutual recognition but also for sensing and sense-making that doesn't get trapped in self-referentiality and the endless mirroring of a warped image of the self. They continue:

> Engaging with people in person is a breath of fresh air that you need in order to make sure that your voice makes sense. Because usually writers—I would think—at least need to spend some time with real people, even if they are ivory tower academics. You lose your footing, you lose your ground, you lose your grounded nature.

Quite literally, losing "touch" with others has immense implications for the kind of academic work and writing that students learn to undertake. Physical isolation and travel restrictions not only pose often insurmountable obstacles to carrying out fieldwork, propelling researchers into seeking methodological alternatives, but also appear as an underlying risk for the kinds of representations academic research may yield. "Writing and studying what people cannot see with their own eyes," notes another interviewee of the class assignment, has its challenges and pitfalls: "What do you write about when you cannot sense something for yourself?" The shrinking of the world of the felt body might enlarge abstract ideas and theories. They project that "either students and academics are going to write more about their own countries and cultures," something that they have immediate access to, or continue to write with authority on something that they haven't been able to fully understand in a hands-on manner—both, they said, would be "a shame."

Where and how can the felt body find a "ground" that does not delimit or confine its feeling capacity, but rather, inspires new connections and relations? There may be windows, quite literally, to the world that can transform the pandemic atmosphere of (self-)isolation and self-referentiality. We introduced "ethnographies from the window" and explored the "'nearby' as an ethnographic space" in our teaching as everyday practices of careful observation.[86] It enabled us to direct attention to the immediate spaces of embodied and situated presence—wherever the body is—and the manifold relationships that surround and animate it. We studied our chairs as embodied extensions of comfort and discomfort; the ballpoint pens on our desk became the objects through which we studied migration and mobility; dating apps helped us to examine feeling in love at a distance; and we used COVID's collective condition of lockdown to study the politics of boredom. Neither inside nor outside did COVID ever suspend our bodies from feeling and (re)making atmospheres. Beyond our computer screens, scenes, objects, and non-human animals moved from a background to the foreground. Things and events formerly reduced to a peripheral outside moved inside. Ring-necked ducks, ospreys, lonely buzzards, loud gulls, small flocks of song thrushes; plastic bags accumulating on empty street corners; cats and rats, cats chasing rats, garbage men; all and more poured our bodies outwards, to the outside. Windows both frame and extend the body. Cultivating a heightened sense of awareness of the atmospheres that in our pre-COVID established routines remained unnoticed, deliberately ignored, or differently excluded now feature suddenly and prominently as part of new assemblages of experience and feeling.

By bodily attuning to the "constant movement between 'inside' and 'outside,' bigger and smaller pictures, worlds within and without,"[87] we may be able to transform old atmospheres and inhabit new ones. What William Burroughs[88] described as the psychosensory process innate to the literary technique of cut-up—"a juxtaposition of what's happening outside and what you're thinking of"—can also turn into a way of being that creatively undoes the work of separation installations, enabling a more intimate connection with what there is. Investing in inhabiting our personal bubbles differently, focusing on the intersections of "cuts" and the context within which a particular sense of "reality" may unfold, can make us more sensitive to privilege and those lived experiences that, as parallel, non-transversal planes, may otherwise never meet in the university's learning spaces. Learning to work with our attention in this way can give rise to aesthetic experiences where the ordinary may be encountered as extraordinary within but also beyond the classroom. Yuriko Saito observes that once we put aside "normal attitudes" to and preconceived notions of our environments, we encourage things and surroundings "to speak to us and engage us." Paying careful attention in this way, "our aesthetic horizons become widened and our lives enriched."[89]

Grounding can also find unexpected locations with surprising implications for academic study. Separation installations that structure the space of the online classroom are often reinforced by the immigration apparatuses of the nation state system. The operation of borders and bordering practices—made apparent and tangible in visas denied or delayed, bodies stuck in foreign lands, family fortunes invested, vast amounts of idle time spent—are also reflected on the screen: who can be present and how, in what feeling and sensing capacity?[90] Shared experiences within the matrix of immigration regimes defining structures of presence and participation have also engendered unexpected lines of solidarity. Students from North America and the Global South found themselves in resonant situations in their quests for entering Europe. What felt like "segregation" particularly strongly in hybrid teaching formats gave rise to conversations and new forms of recognition that may have been prevented or obstructed by privilege. A student from North America notes: "I met people from backgrounds who are... recognized, neither at the university, nor in the discipline," and, against what might have been expected consciously or unconsciously, they developed closer relationships with them. In this way, the student remarked, "I had some very honest conversations with people I'm not sure I would have had otherwise." The lockdowns

facilitated more introspection and with that, solidarity along redrawn lines. In becoming more sensitive to other realities, an enhanced sensitivity and a wider sense of "inclusivity" seeped into the design and focus of academic research. In the ongoing critical work of exposing epistemic and social violence, the new connections made engendered more subtle understandings of "reality." Students noted their own surprise at taking a stronger stance on certain issues: "some arguments have become sharpened more than I had wanted them to be."

The absence of the teacher can also serve as a pedagogical tool in the pandemic classroom for facilitating such encounters. Break-out rooms can act as atmospheric bubbles for bonding and community building, as intimate spaces where the teacher's authority may not be present. Students reported their frustration with professors and teaching assistants checking into break-out rooms to see how the discussion was going and, if they deemed it necessary, intervening. The sudden appearance of "authority" disturbed the sensitive and still-fragile atmospheres of trust and regaining confidence. As such, the break-out room carries the possibility of facilitating connections that would be hard to organize in the atmosphere of the classroom: conversations that could carry this almost fully private property, free from the gaze of instructors, are almost impossible to orchestrate.[91] To curate horizontal spaces in the (post) pandemic classroom—or at least to acknowledge students' capacity to teach and learn from each other without intervention as an equally important component of learning journeys—might already encourage atmospheres with a much wider plane of interactions and richness in insight, beyond the normalized aesthetic sensibility of top-down instruction.

Conclusion

We wrote this contribution first within and subsequently in the shadows of COVID. Teaching remained an integral part of our everyday lives throughout our episodic writing. Taking time to think about our teaching amid dramatic changes enabled an opportunity to reflect on the specificities and details of what had and what had not changed. The start of our writing was marked and shaped by an atmosphere of large and swift transformations. The quick "fix" offered by university management to the real challenge(s) posed by COVID resulted in an almost unquestioned decision to change where we teach. Little discussion followed as to how online atmospheres differ from those teaching rooms and theaters we traditionally inhabit and embody. Instead, teaching, together with student and teacher identities, were presented as transferable practices and categories that can be moved around at political and economic will. In our writing, we identified ways in which COVID has transformed pedagogical relations, giving rise to new and unexpected atmospheres while others change or phase out. We do not consider or offer alternatives to online learning in our contribution, although we are open to the critique that teaching should not be limited to a dichotomous choice between online and onsite. Instead, we are more interested in addressing how the mediation of online technologies affects embodied teaching and learning. Drawing inspiration from recent new-phenomenological work, we think and feel atmospherically through the changes in our teaching practices, that, we should remember, define our subjectivities and those of our "profession."

Today, at the moment of editing and revising the final draft of this paper, we find ourselves immersed in a very different place and atmosphere. Universities have opened their doors for students and staff to return; teaching theaters are filled again with bodies; social distancing is a new history about which soon we will write and read; face masks are no longer worn or seen on campus; and the old classroom politics of race, class, accent, and silence which we identified earlier have made a reappearance. What, if anything, has changed? Traces from the previous atmosphere continue to linger either as museumified reminders or as memories imprinted on the felt body: forgotten sanitizing machines on walls; a lost warning on a notice board urging students to wash their hands; PM Johnson's lies echoing on a lone unattended television screen; stories of colleagues with long COVID left out of today's headlines. Besides the exception of the short-lived promise of "hybridity," a derivative event that split bodies into virtuality and actuality, things returned quickly to what has uninspiringly and exhaustingly been labelled as the "old normal." Medical studies show a link between memory loss and COVID but the very atmosphere of COVID, marked by repetition, boredom, anxiety, loss, and trauma, may also have contributed to the emergence of a broader process of collective forgetting that may well be intentional, but should not be accepted as an alternative to healing. The felt body has a memory of its own, but each body feels differently. Early research suggests that bodies teaching in conditions of precarity were especially affected[92] and some of them worked while infected with COVID out of existential necessity.[93]

At first, upon returning to the atmosphere of silence, we noticed excitement in our classrooms. The students we interacted with were sincerely happy to be able to sit next to each other and us, lecturers, shared feelings of enjoyment being in their embodied presence. The atmosphere in our teaching spaces filled with buzz, promise and anticipation. Many undergraduate students had never been on campus and were eager to learn, socialize and experience university fun. As the first year of post-COVID teaching progressed, however, we started to notice a growing number of empty seats in our classrooms. An ever-increasing number of emails and discussion board

notifications filled our inboxes with questions if our lectures would be recorded and where video files could be found. Lecturers too find themselves wishing to work from home more often. Staff meetings are attended online by many; corridors are only half as frequented as they used to be; and office desks are gathering dust. It is unclear which practices and objects of this atmosphere are transient, and which ones will linger to affect and shape bodies for the longer term.

Embracing the unknowns that continue to stay with us, our ethnographic accounts encountered and negotiated a range of unexpected relations and opportunities shaped by a dislocation of bodies and teaching practices. "[A]ny radical pedagogy," as hooks illuminates, "must insist that everyone's presence is acknowledged… To begin, the professor must genuinely value everyone's presence. There must be an ongoing recognition that everyone influences the classroom dynamic, that everyone contributes. These contributions are resources."[94] Thinking atmospherically through the legacies and current trajectories of the (post) pandemic classroom, we offer this contribution as a resource to acknowledge and appreciate the many forms of presence that permeate the diverse and often fluid lived realities of pedagogical relations. Prompted by shared concerns of wellbeing and care for educational futures, we introduced Schmitz's atmospheric thinking and interpretation of the "feeling body" as a conceptual frame to engage and think with moments of the "old" normal in the university, the "new" normal of pandemic infrastructures and their aftermath in which we are currently immersed. We have translated some of the ethical implications of the feeling body into an embodied, felt, and open-ended mode of inquiry and research practice that unfolds at the intersections of professional roles, subjective experiences and cultural situatedness. We re-inhabited atmospheres of the past and traced their convergent but also equally discontinuous trajectories through online instruction into what we understand and navigate as our actual (post) pandemic condition. In this attempt, we stayed attuned to how bodies move in and are moved by atmospheres while also engendering new atmospheric properties. We aimed to map out pedagogical possibilities, both in a relentless search for what "the practice of freedom" (hooks 1994) might mean and how it may actualize itself in times of dislocation, and as localized enactments of a sense of freedom as we were working through memories, scars, constraints, and embraced instances of solidarity, discovery, and connection. Orienting our research in this way we found inspiration (as often as continuing and deep-seated tensions) in unlikely places. Among other things, this is what thinking atmospherically enabled for us, and the sentiment—the feel—of which we would like to convey in this paper; that is, the *atmosphere* of thinking atmospherically within and beyond the classroom. We trust that it travels wide and far in thought, in feeling—with the air.

Notes

[1] Dylan Trigg, "Atmospheres of Anxiety: The Case of Covid-19," in *Atmospheres and Shared Emotions*, ed. Dylan Trigg (London: Routledge, 2021), 77–95, 80.
[2] For instance, see: Peter Sloterdijk, *Terror from the Air* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006); Marijn Nieuwenhuis, "Introduction: atmospheric politics and state governance," *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 9.3 (2016): 478–481.
[3] Examples include: Hermann Schmitz, Rudolf Owen Müllan and Jan Slaby, "Emotions outside the box—the new phenomenology of feeling and corporeality," *Phenomenology and the cognitive sciences* 10.2 (2011): 241–259; Gernot Böhme, "The Concept of Body as the Nature We Ourselves Are," *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 24.3 (2010): 224–238.
[4] We make the deliberate decision to decentre and politicize the concept of "the West" by adopting a lowercase "w." For a carefully written history of the term, see Alastair Bonnett's *The Idea of the West* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).
[5] Schmitz et al., "Emotions outside," 254.
[6] Schmitz et al., "Emotions outside."
[7] bell hooks, *Teaching to transgress: education as the practice of freedom* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1994), 12.
[8] Gernot Böhme, *Atmospheric Architectures: The Aesthetics of Felt Spaces* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 1, original emphasis.
[9] Roy Schwartzman, "Performing Pandemic Pedagogy," *Communication Education* 69.4 (2020): 502–517.
[10] hooks, *Teaching to transgress*, 12, 13.
[11] hooks, *Teaching to transgress*, 7.
[12] hooks, *Teaching to transgress*, 8.
[13] Becky Tipper, "Everyday ethnographies and the art of eavesdropping: capturing ordinary human-animal encounters," in *Mundane Methods: Innovative Ways to Research the Everyday*, ed. Helen Holmes, Sarah Marie Hall (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020) 137–155, 142.
[14] Hermann Schmitz, "Hermann Schmitz, the "New Phenomenology," in *Phenomenology World-wide: Foundations—Expanding Dynamics—Life-Engagements A Guide for Research and Study*, ed. Anna-Teresa

Tymieniecka (Dordrecht: Springer, 2002) 491–494; Hermann Schmitz, "Atmospheric Spaces," *Ambiances. Environnement sensible, architecture et espace urbain* (2016), https://doi.org/10.4000/ambiances.711; Hermann Schmitz, *New phenomenology: A brief introduction* (Milan: Mimesis, 2019).

[15] Gernot Böhme, "Atmosphere as the fundamental concept of a new aesthetics," *Thesis eleven* 36.1 (1993): 113–126; Böhme, "Concept of Body"; Gernot Böhme. "The art of the stage set as a paradigm for an aesthetics of atmospheres." *Ambiances. Environnement sensible, architecture et espace urbain* (2013), https://doi.org/10.4000/ambiances.315; Genot Böhme and Jean-Paul Thibaud (editor), *The Aesthetics of Atmospheres* (London: Routledge, 2017).

[16] See: Rachelle Chadwick, "Embodied methodologies: challenges, reflections and strategies," *Qualitative Research* 17.1 (2017): 54 –74.

[17] Schmitz explains that he envisaged that the New Phenomenology, driven by empirical knowledge and open-ended ontology, "aims to make their actual lives comprehensible to humans, that is, to make accessible again spontaneous life experience in continuous contemplation after having cleared away artificial ideas prefigured in history." See Schmitz, "New phenomenology,":11.

[18] Tim Edensor and Shanti Sumartojo, "Designing Atmospheres: introduction to Special Issue," *Visual Communication* 14.3 (2015): 251–265.

[19] Peter Zumthor, *Atmospheres: Architectural Environments. Surrounding Objects* (Badel: Birkhäuser, 2006).

[20] Böhme, "Atmosphere as the fundamental."

[21] Ben Anderson, "Affective Atmospheres," *Emotion, Space and Society* 2.2 (2009): 77–81; Mikkel Bille and Kirsten Simonsen, "Atmospheric Practices: On Affecting and Being Affected," *Space and Culture* 24, 2 (2019) 295–309; David Bissell, Maria Hynes and Scott Sharpe, "Unveiling Seductions beyond Societies of Control: Affect, Security, and Humour in Spaces of Aeromobility," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 30 (2012) 694–710.

[22] Angharad Closs Stephens, *National Affects: The Everyday Atmospheres of Being Political* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022); Sara Fregonese, "Affective atmospheres, urban geopolitics and conflict (de)escalation in Beirut," *Political Geography* 61 (2017) 1–10.

[23] Andrea Moldzio, *Schizophrenie. Eine philosophische Erkrankung?* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2004); Cristina Costa, Sergio Carmenates, Luis Madeira, and Giovanni Stanghellini, "Phenomenology of atmospheres. The felt meanings of clinical encounters," *Journal of Psychopathology* 20 (2014): 351–357; Gianni Francesetti and Tonino Griffero, eds., *Psychopathology and atmospheres: neither inside nor outside* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019).

[24] Tonino Griffero, *Atmospheres: Aesthetics of Emotional Spaces* (London: Routledge, 2016), 108.

[25] Schmitz et al., "Emotions outside."

[26] Anderson, "Affective Atmospheres."

[27] Dylan Trigg, "The role of atmosphere in shared emotion," *Emotion, Space and Society* 35, May (2002), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2020.100658.

[28] Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004).

[29] Closs Stephens, "National Affects"; see also: Angharad Closs Stephens, "The affective atmospheres of nationalism," *cultural geographies* 23.2 (2016): 181–198.

[30] Böhme, "The art of the stage," np.

[31] Schmitz's writing covers a period of almost 50 years with his largely untranslated ten-volume large "System of Philosophy" [*System der Philosophie,* 1964–1980] at the center. The first translation of his work into English appeared in a short article published in 2011 by Rudolf Owen Müllan and Jan Slaby (see: Schmitz et al., "Emotions Outside").

[32] Böhme, "Concept of Body."

[33] Schmitz et al., "Emotions outside," 247, original emphasis.

[34] Schmitz et al., "Emotions outside," 254, original emphasis.

[35] Griffero in Schmitz, *New Phenomenology*, 11.

[36] This distinction draws on Edmund Husserl's work: *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy: Second Book Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989).

[37] "When I feel my hand, an absolute 'here' is implied in this feeling. This absolute 'here' that is implied in bodily feeling is a here-am-I, or more precisely, it is the primitive present that Schmitz has made his principle of philosophy." Böhme, "Concept of Body," 228.

[38] Especially the feminist work of Robyn Longhurst, *Bodies: Exploring Fluid Boundaries* (London: Routledge, 2004).

[39] See also Marijn Nieuwenhuis, "Porous skin: Breathing through the prism of the holey body," *Emotion, Space and Society* 33 (2019): 100595, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2019.100595.

[40] For a more detailed discussion, see Jan Slaby, "Affective intentionality and the feeling body," *Phenomenology and the cognitive sciences* 7 (2008): 429–444.
[41] Hermann Schmitz (2021) "The Felt Body ('Leib')" in *Online Encyclopedia Philosophy of Nature/ Online Lexikon Naturphilosophie*, ed. Thomas Kirchhoff, https://doi.org/10.11588/oepn.2021.0.79594.
[42] Schmitz, "Hermann Schmitz, the 'New Phenomenology,'" 492.
[43] Böhme, "Concept of Body" 228.
[44] Ahmed, "Cultural Politics," 222, original emphasis.
[45] Böhme, "Atmospheric Architectures," 20.
[46] See also Anderson, "Affective Atmospheres."
[47] Schmitz et al., "Emotions Outside," 247, our emphasis.
[48] Zumthor, "Atmospheres: Architectural Environments," 12.
[49]Andreas Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos, "Withdrawing from atmosphere: An ontology of air partitioning and affective engineering," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 34.1 (2016): 150–167.
[50] Bissell et al., "Unveiling Seductions."
[51] Jean-Paul Thibaud, "The backstage of urban ambiances: When atmospheres pervade everyday experience," *Emotion, Space and Society* 15 (2015) 39–46, 39, original emphasis.
[52] hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*, 39.
[53] Schmitz et al., "Emotions Outside," 244.
[54] See also The Guardian, "'I no longer view the flag with suspicion'," *The Guardian,* 2004), accessed March 24, 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2004/jun/10/britishidentity.features111.
[55] Andreas Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos, "Atmospheres of law: Senses, affects, lawscapes," *Emotion, Space and Society* 7 (2013): 35–44, 41.
[56] Jacques Derrida, *Who's Afraid of Philosophy?: Right to Philosophy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 90.
[57] Sara Ahmed, "A phenomenology of whiteness," *Feminist Theory* 82 (2007): 149–168, 161.
[58] Aretina R. Hamilton, "The Geography of Despair (or All These Rubber Bullets)," *Medium* (2020), accessed December 7, 2022, https://blackgeographer.medium.com/the-geography-of-despair-or-all-these-rubber-bullets-6f6d711159f5.
[59] Naomi Millner, "Unsettling feelings in the classroom: scaffolding pedagogies of discomfort as part of decolonising human geography in higher education," *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* (2021): 1–20, https://doi.org/10.1080/03098265.2021.2004391.
[60] Exceptions include Kat Rands, Jess McDonald and Lauren Clapp, "Landscaping Classrooms towards Queer Utopias" in *Utopia: A critical Inquiry into Queer Utopias*, ed. Angela Jones (New York: Palgrave and Macmillan, 2013), 149–174.
[61] Atmosphere are engineered into classroom design. For instance, one manual for classroom design for a US university states: "Students have a fundamental right to a classroom learning environment that allows them to *see* anything presented *visually*, to *hear* any *audible* presentation free from *noises* and *distortions*, and to be *physically comfortable* (*air flow*, *temperature*, *furniture*, etc.) regardless of the method of instruction used." Office of Information Technology, *Classroom Design Manual: Guidelines for Designing, Constructing, and Renovating Instructional Spaces at the University of Maryland* (College Park, MD: University of Maryland, 2004), 1, emphasis added.
[62] Derrida, *Who's Afraid*, 90.
[63] hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*, 195.
[64] Maybe whiteness can also hide my past? Or, differently, can my dislocating accent help hide the fact that no one in my family went to university? Can it hide that I am an impostor, a secret agent? What to do with all these questions, where and how do they fit in my teaching?
[65] Schmitz in Griffero, "Aesthetics of emotional spaces," 125.
[66] A celebrated study of the politics of accent is provided in Rosina Lippi-Green, *English with an Accent: Language, Ideology and Discrimination in the United States* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012).
[67] Nieuwenhuis, "Porous skin."
[68] See also Lynn Isenbarger and Michalinos Zembylas, "The emotional labour of caring in teaching," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 22 (2006): 120–134; Sue Ellen Henry, "Vulnerability and emotional risk in an educational philosophy," *Emotion, Space and Society* 8 (2013): 11–17.
[69] Jacques Derrida, *Eyes of the University: Right to Philosophy 2* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 132.
[70] Henry, "Vulnerability," 15, original emphasis.
[71] Madina Tlostanova, Suruchi Thapar-Björkert and Redi Koobak, "Border thinking and disidentification: Postcolonial and postsocialist feminist dialogues," *Feminist Theory* 17.2 (2016): 211–228

[72] See also Erzsébet Strausz, *Writing the Self and Transforming Knowledge in International Relations: Towards a Politics of Liminality* (London: Routledge, 2018).
[73] Walter D. Mignolo, "I am where i think: Epistemology and the colonial difference," *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 8.2 (1999): 235–245.
[74] Walter. D. Mignolo, "Introduction: coloniality of power and de-colonial thinking," *Cultural Studies* 23.2–3 (2007): 155–167.
[75] Madina Tlostanova, "Postsocialist ≠ postcolonial? On post-Soviet imaginary and global coloniality," *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 48.2 (2012): 130–142, 131.
[76] Naeem Inayatullah, "Impossibilities: Generative Misperformance and the Movements of the Teaching Body," in *International Politics and Performance: Critical Aesthetics and Creative Practice*, ed. Jenny Edkins and Adrian Kear (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 150–157, 157.
[77] Stephen Cowden, Gurnam Singh with Sarah Amsler, Joyce Canaan and Sara Motta, *Acts of Knowing: Critical Pedagogy In, Against and Beyond the University* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).
[78] See Erzsébet Strausz, "The affirmative power of presence through absence, online," *Critical Studies on Security* 9.1 (2021): 67–71.
[79] hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*, 22.
[80] hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*.
[81] Peter Sloterdijk, *Foams—Spheres Volume III: Plural Spherology* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016).
[82] Sloterdijk, *Foams*, 236.
[83] Giorgio Agamben, "Identity without the Person," in *Nudities*, ed. Giorgio Agamben (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011) 46–54, 46.
[84] See Jenny Edkins, *Missing: Persons and Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011).
[85] On atmospheres of trust, see Marijn Nieuwenhuis, "Geographies of Trust: Hitchhiking from Gateshead to Calais," *GeoHumanities* 8.1 (2022): 329–343.
[86] Liang-Liang Zhang (2021) "'Self as Method,' Others as Mirror," *Windows and Mirrors: Reflections on the Ethnographic Method in Times of Crisis* (University of Cambridge, 2021), accessed March 28, 2023: https://www.socanth.cam.ac.uk/news/windows-and-mirrors-reflections-ethnographic-method-times-crisis.
[87] Trevor McCrisken and Erzsébet Strausz, "The Drone Cut-up Project," in *Critical Methods for the Study of World Politics: Creativity and Transformation*, ed. Shine Choi, Anna Selmeczi and Erzsébet Strausz (London: Routledge, 2019), 178–198, 179–180.
[88] William S. Burroughs and Brion Gysin, *The Third Mind* (New York: The Viking Press, 1978).
[89] Yuriko Saito, *Aesthetics of the Familiar: Everyday Life and World-Making* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2017), 17–18.
[90] On other occasions, a new geopolitical politics emerges, as teaching times remain centred along existing locational temporalities of power. From our position in the UK or Austria, African students find themselves in a better position to attend classes than those in Asia, where students were expected to attend classes at midnight or even later.
[91] Strausz, "Affirmative power."
[92] See Canan Neşe Kınıkoğlu and Aysegul Can, "Negotiating the different degrees of precarity in the UK academia during the Covid-19 pandemic," *European Societies* 23.1 (2021): S817–S830.
[93] See, for instance, Anastasios Hadjisolomou, Fotios Mitsakis and Steven Gary, "Too scared to go sick: Precarious academic work and 'presenteeism culture' in the UK higher education sector during the Covid-19 pandemic," *Work, Employment and Society* 36.3 (2022): 569–579.
[94] hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*, 8.